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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (PARA MARKINGS AND CLASS BY)

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SUBJECT: PORTUGUESE REACTIONS TO THE MAJOR ECONOMIES MEETING

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CLASSIFIED BY MOLLY TREIBER FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D)

#### Summary

1.(U) Ministry of Environment officials told post that the EU was encouraged by the September 27-28 Major Economies Meeting hosted by the White House, but remained concerned that this new initiative not drain resources from the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change process. They thought the US could provide the most value added in the areas of technology, deforestation and finance. They were concerned with the lack of a clear US long-term vision, but appreciated the USG honesty in acknowledging its "struggle" to tackle climate change.

#### Encouraged but still Concerned

12. (C) Fausto Brito e Abreu, Environment State Secretary Humberto Rosa's Chief of Staff, and Nuno Lacasta, Coordinator of Portugal's Climate Change Commission, told post on October 3 that Portugal and the EU had come away from the Major Economies Meeting convinced of the USG's commitment to tackling climate change and were particularly impressed by Secretary Rice's "fantastic" opening speech.

Brito e Abreu and Lacasta, both of whom accompanied Rosa to the MEM, confided that the EU's initial concerns that the MEM would promote voluntary, rather than binding, emission targets had been lessened during President Bush's speech. However, they remained concerned that the MEM would divert resources from the UN initiative, even though they no longer believed that the US was trying to create a parallel process, and asked that the State Department coordinate with them to prepare for Bali. They said the USG had underestimated the work to be done in preparation for the December meeting and appeared to lack familiarity with the UN process.

#### Leading by Example

13. (C) Claiming that Europeans have demonstrated leadership on climate change, Brito e Abreu hoped the US would join the EU in the forefront and set an example for developing nations. Insisting on including developing countries (i.e. China and

India) in mandatory targets, he commented, would only delay necessary action to combat climate change. It would be better if the EU and the US could lead by example. Lacasta suggested that if the three areas where the US had the greatest value added -- technology, deforestation and finance -- were addressed properly, they could help propel the UN process toward greater success. He also opined that substantive areas such as technology, deforestation, and finance were likely to be used by countries down the road to evaluate the credibility of the MEM.

#### EU Pleased with US Presentations

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¶4. (C) Regarding the meeting itself, Brito e Abreu indicated that he was pleasantly surprised by the number of US speakers who addressed carbon markets. In addition, the main European delegations were pleased to have provided input to the Chairman's Summary, but were disappointed that their preferred language on carbon trading schemes (vice price signals) was not utilized and that the summary neglected to mention the French offer to hold the next MEM. The Portuguese indicated that they were only notified of the French proposal the night prior to its offer; however, they welcomed the suggestion as a means of ensuring that ownership of the process is shared around the globe. (Note: They commented that the French only offered to host once they were convinced of the USG commitment. End Note.) Brito e Abreu and Lacasta hoped that the White House would remain engaged at the highest levels as this ensure the political will to move the process forward. Both officials, however, noted their disappointment that the press was only present during US presentations and opined that it seemed to suggest a unilateral approach to the meeting.

#### Disappointed with US's Lack of Long Term Goals

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¶5. (C) Brito e Abreu and Lacasta noted that many delegates, including Humberto Rosa, were disappointed with the apparent lack of USG vision on long-term initiatives. Brito e Abreu said the US delegation had not come prepared to present any long term climate change goals following presentations by the

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EU, Canada, and Japan during the second day of meetings, and scrambled to do so when asked. He opined that other countries did not attend the conference "to serve as consultants" although he did appreciate the USG's honesty in acknowledging its "struggle" to create climate change goals and viewed it as a sign of serious US engagement on the issue.

#### Rosa's Harsh Comments Will Not Affect Relations

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¶6. (C) Brito e Abreu told post that Rosa came away from the MEM convinced the US is committed to tackling climate change in close collaboration with others, despite his harsh remarks in a 4 October press article responding to Ambassador Hoffman's 29 September climate change interview. Rosa was angered by the Ambassador's remarks about Portugal and other members failing to meet their own Kyoto commitments and criticized the Ambassador for using "imprecise statistics" in comparing the environmental performance of the US with that of the EU. However, we do not expect this exchange to affect Portugal's determination to work with us in the aftermath of the MEM meeting and in preparation for Bali and beyond.  
Hoffman